SACWN Inc.

Volume 19
JUNE/JULY 2001

Sacramento Area Community Women's Network

THE BELLS ARE RINGING -- FOR ME AND MY GAL

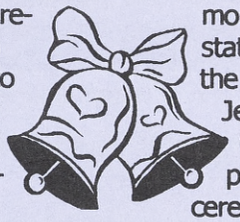
By Sue Charles

Call them Commitment Ceremonies, Weddings, Union Ceremonies, Trysts, Handfasting or whatever you will, lesbians are "getting hitched" in record numbers these days. While lesbians have been having ceremonies throughout time, the difference we have noticed lately is that our ceremonies are bursting into visibility, becoming much more open and public in nature. What a wonderful statement that makes about us feeling safe enough and strong enough to proclaim to the world our love for each other and our intention to honor the relationships we cherish.

While contemplating writing an article about "lesbian weddings" I was fortunate enough to meet Ellie Charlton and Jeanne Barnett, who graciously agreed to talk to us about their experience. As most of you will recall, Ellie and Jeanne's ceremony in January of 1999 grew to such proportions it had to be held at the Convention Center to accommodate the crowd and resulted in tumult within the United Methodist Church that lasted for over a year. One has to wonder if their very public statement of pride has had something to do with the subsequent increase in lesbian ceremonies that we have noted.

Ellie and Jeanne met in the mid-1980's at a lesbian social organization and developed a friendship which eventually turned romantic. Their tenderness and delight charmed us as they reminisced about the blossoming of their relationship all those years ago. When asked why they had not had a ceremony until after they had been together for fifteen years, they explained that earlier in their relationship their families would not have been as supportive as they eventually became, and they did not want to have to do it privately or in a hidden fashion.

The perfect opportunity presented itself for them when, after the United Methodist Church had made a ruling that holy union ceremonies could not be held for gays, the pastor of the congregation in which they are actively involved stated he would do a union ceremony publicly as a statement of protest to the church. Ellie and Jeanne agreed to be the first couple to plan such a ceremony because they felt it was so important to make a statement to the church as well as to make a social statement to the community at large about the seriousness of their commitment to each other.



Eventually 150 lay and clergy leaders gathered with over 1200 supportive guests to bless their union, while an additional 600 supporters from the community gathered outside in a Circle of Love which enveloped the building. Ellie stated that "after setting the date everything just fell into place." People came forward to help provide flowers, music, decorations, photography and videos. They weren't nervous because they believed so strongly in what they were doing and today feel that the prayers they received from across the nation were what got them through it.

We asked them, if given the opportunity, would they do it the same way again. They told us that as very private people, no, they would not do it again because of the publicity, but knowing how much it meant to the gay community they would do it again in an instant. Everywhere they go someone still tells them how much it meant to them. They feel that it is extremely important for gays and lesbians to make a social statement and for those of us in relationships to acknowledge them publicly.

When asked how the ceremony has changed their relationship, Ellie agreed when Jeanne said that "it has drawn us even closer than in all the 15 years before and has opened up a new era of commitment to each other." We also asked what advice they would give to couples who are presently planning a ceremony and they emphatically said, "Go for it! One of the nicest things about being lesbian is that there are no traditions you have to follow" so you can design a ceremony that reflects your own personal style.

Another couple we know is doing just that by planning a small, private commitment ceremony in the beautiful backyard of close friends to be held on the date of their second anniversary. For Janet and Nancy, the ceremony is about the spiritual union and repeating their vows in front of others, affirming the depth of their

(Continued on Page 7)

SACWN Inc.

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THE SACWN MISSION

SACWN's mission is to provide lesbians with social activities in a safe and vibrant environment, a supportive network, and resources to link our diverse community.

SACWN NEWSLETTER POLICY

This newsletter is entirely dependent on volunteers. Please remember that we also have full time jobs.

In order to be included in the next newsletter, material must arrive in our mailbox or at our e-mail address by the 12th of March. We encourage submissions (e.g., Letters to the Editor, news items, photos, etc.). Please type submissions and include your name and phone number for verification. Submissions on diskette (Word97) or by e-mail are especially encouraged.

FREE ADS: This section is for selling things of a personal nature, advertising for a roommate or finding a lost love. These ads are FREE to SACWN members who are advertising for personal use (no business advertising).

BUSINESS ADS: Camera-ready ads are $150, per business card size ad. Ads must be prepaid. Ads are on a 12-month/six issues per year basis. For more info, please contact Sandy at 916-944-7055.

NOTE: The SACWN newsletter expresses the opinions of the authors, and does not necessarily represent the opinions of the Steering Committee or the general membership. The editor reserves the right to exclude and/or edit the length of letters and articles.

CONFIDENTIALITY: SACWN takes the following precautions to insure the privacy of it's members:

1. The mailing list is never sold nor lent to anyone—be they other women's groups or inquiring lesbians.
2. The newsletter is always sent 1st class, rather than at the cheaper bulk rate.
3. Each newsletter is addressed to a specific subscriber, not "resident" or "household."
4. Newsletters are not sent to individual men

~~ Women who want to participate in the operation of SACWN are encouraged to contact any of the committee coordinators listed to the left.

Special Thanks....

On behalf of Sacramento's lesbian community, SACWN wishes to thank Betty for her almost three years of service on the SACWN Steering Committee. Betty has decided to take a hiatus from the Steering Committee at this time and she will be sorely missed. However, we are thankful that she has agreed to continue her involvement with SACWN as a volunteer. Betty's dedication to the community and to providing social networking opportunities for our area's women has been greatly appreciated. Again, thank you Betty and all the women like you who work so hard to make our community a better place.

Suggestions For Prenuptial Agreements

As long as we are on the subject of commitment ceremonies, we thought it might be helpful to offer some suggestions for common issues that probably need to be covered in most lesbian prenuptial agreements. Certainly each relationship is unique, so feel free to incorporate your own ideas --- we will not be offended.

- We agree that the purchase of season tickets for Monarchs games will take precedence over all other bills.
- My partner agrees that my money is her money only when she is purchasing gifts for me.
- We agree not to divulge the intimate details of our first date or sexual encounter unless they are more interesting than what the other couple is telling us about theirs.
- My partner agrees to do all the cooking since she cooked wonderful meals early in the relationship to impress me.
- My partner agrees to replace the toilet paper on the roll in the same manner as I do.
- We agree not to alienate the affections of our respective pets.
- My partner will allow me to win at least 75% of all games played together.
- My partner agrees never to become best friends with any of my ex-lovers.
- My partner agrees that a trip to Home Depot classifies as a date.
- We each agree to cremate any pre-existing sex toys before entering into a committed relationship.
- We agree to be monogamous unless it is Jodie Foster.
- My partner agrees not to use either of the two recipes I know how to cook if we are both required to take something to a potluck.
- My partner agrees to initiate sex at least 75% of the time and to always be in the mood when I am.
- My partner agrees to iron her jeans when we are invited to a semi-formal event.
- My partner agrees to wash any clothes of mine she has borrowed.
- We agree to call in sick when work conflicts with major sporting events such as the World Series.
- In the event of divorce, all friends acquired during the relationship will be considered mine.

JOIN SACWN AT MONARCH GAMES

Tickets—$17.00 ($18.50 value)

Join SACWN at the FIRST Monarch's
Gay Pride Night
Sponsored by Mom Guess What

Game One:
Monarchs v. Detroit
Saturday, July 21 @ 7:00 pm
Arco Arena

We have 30 tickets for this game

Game Two:
Monarchs v. Phoenix
Sunday, July 29 @ 1:00 pm
Arco Arena

We have 40 tickets for this game.

2nd Annual Tailgate Party sponsored by Merrill Lynch. Be sure to stop by for a free hot dog and soda at 11:30 am. We will be in the northwest parking Lot F of Arco Arena.

Send your check to: **SACWN**
PO Box 19036
Sacramento, CA 95819-0036

Name _____
Address _____
_____
Phone _____

Game 1 Tickets_____X $17. each = $_____
Payment check due by July 5, 2001.

Name_____
Address_____
_____
Phone_____

Game 2 Tickets_____X $17. each = $_____
Payment check due by July 5, 2001.

Call 451-8034 if you need more information.

Special Interest Groups (SIGS) Bulletin

SACWN's SIGs are small, friendly groups of women who get together monthly (if not more often) to share activities of mutual interest. New members are always welcomed, so we encourage you to call the contact person listed to find out what activities are being planned.

If you are interested in forming a Special Interest Group (SIG), please contact Dee at 443-2377 with your idea. You could share a favorite hobby or interest with other women. We are looking for a leader for the Singles Group. It seems that every woman who takes this on ends up in a relationship. If you are interested in leading the Singles Group or any other SIG, contact Dee at the above number.

Rainbow Campers

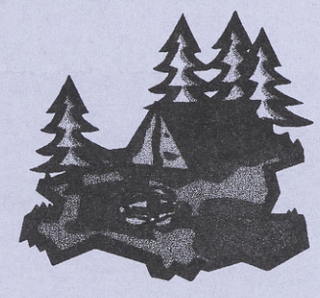
Rainbow Campers, founded by the late Jayne Rountree, is a loose knit group of lesbians who get together and camp at preselected campgrounds each month, April through October. In memory of Jayne we held an impromptu meeting while camping at Coloma and decided on the following trips for 2001:

June 15,16,17 Casini Ranch. Joyce & Barb 929-3074.

July 20,21,22 Olema (Pt. Reyes area). Joyce & Barb 929-3074.

October 19,20,21 Coloma. Mary & Linda 732-5269.

These trips were decided "ad hoc". We have no trip ideas for May August or September. Anyone willing to be a Wagon Master or who has an idea for where to camp please call Barbara at 929-3074. Destinations should be easily reached for those who work and would not be able to travel until late in the day or the next day.



How to Attend a Trip:

1. Call the Wagoneer for the trip(s) you want to attend. She will make the group reservation up to sixty days in advance of the scheduled camp date, so call her early.
2. The Wagoneer will tell you the site fee and cancellation date. She will request that you send her the fee for the number of nights that you plan to camp.

If you decide to cancel your reservation, call the Wagoneer before the cancellation date. Fee refunds cannot be made after the cancellation date.

Top 10

Top 10 is a group of women over fifty and women who love women over fifty. Each month we get together for a meal at a local restaurant or for special at-home potlucks. ***Saturday, June 23sd*** – Hot dog fun at Sharon G's. Bring a side dish, a folding chair, your favorite drink and your swim suit. Call Sharon G. at 944-7035 or Betty W. at 456-2577 by June 20th to RSVP and get directions.

For information on ***July's event***, call Kitty R. at 923-0912 or Betty W. at 456-2577 by July 1st. We should have details for you by then.

Newcomers

Facilitator needed for this SIG, can you help? Could you show newcomers where to go and how to meet people? If so, please call Dee @ 443-2377. Want to meet new people?

Garden Club

The Garden Club shares information, plantings, takes landscape tours, and much more. If you're interested, please e-mail me at gpfgarden@cs.com or call Glenda 916-454-0246

(SIGS Cont'd)

Fool House Poker Group

Feeling lucky? Then join us for a friendly game of poker the ***2nd Friday of every month***. Novice players welcome. I guarantee you'll have a good time. For game time and location, call Gretchen 916-922-6287 or Mary 916-723-5269.

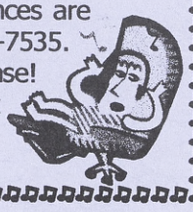
Half-Fast Hiking Group

This is a well-organized, friendly group of serious hikers who know how to have fun. We are in our fourth successful year of day-hiking with hikes scheduled once per month all year long. We walk at a comfortable pace and usually average about five miles round trip on hikes that are rated easy to moderate. Call for a calendar of events and an information sheet. All newcomers will receive a warm welcome! Please join us for the time of your life! Call Linda or Julie at 731-5838:

June 10 – Caples Creek
July 22 – Lake Winnamuka
August 19 – Point Reyes
September 9 – Angel Island
October 28 – Bridgeport
November 18 – Putah Creek
December16 –River Trail Bike Ride

Women's Music

Are you interested in women's music? Do you want to support women musicians that have been involved in the women's movement for many years while having a good time? We will be going to live performances of women's music in Northern California. All are welcome to join us and enjoy the pleasures that listening to great music can bring. If you are interested in joining us or if you just want to know what performances are coming up call Pat—916-363-7535. Make sure you ask for Pat, please! You can also e-mail me at pwood314@yahoo.com



Arts & Entertainment

Coming up...

Saturday, June 2, 2:00PM, Broadway musical **"Contact",** Curran Theatre in San Francisco. We have booked Front Balcony, Row A, Seats 10, 12, & 14. Tickets available at Ticketmaster box offices for $60.00 plus $6.25 service charge. Plan on Brunch too.

Are you a member/subscriber of **Capital Public Radio?** If you are, we get in free to **CPR's Tuesday Night Music in the Zoo 6:00PM Concerts**. **June 12,** Mick Martin & the Blues Rockers will be performing at Sacramento Zoo. Bring your own lawn chair or blanket. Drinks usually available - food not so much. **June 26** The Habanero Quartet (Latin Jazz) is in performance. For non-CPR members, admission is $6.25 to zoo and Tuesday night music. Still a pretty good deal! More concerts in July too.

Saturday, June 23, 8:00PM, Lambda's **"Beautiful Thing",** 24th Street Theatre, 24th Street and 3rd Avenue. Tickets $10/adv resv or $12 at door. Call 484-4742 to reserve tickets.

Sunday, September 23, 6:00PM, **Anne Murray,** Dalton Hall at Jackson Rancheria. Hall is smokefree. Call Sharon 487-9851 for more information.

Please **RSVP** timely in order to arrange carpool and/or dinner reservations. For more information, and to suggest an event for the group, call Dee 443-2377.

Volunteer to be an usher at a prominent playhouse and see the stage play as a thank you. Call Kathy 920-2162.

Wanna Dance?

The Friday Night Dance provides a fun environment for everyone. Do you enjoy dancing, want to learn to dance, like to socialize or people watch? Come out and join us for a no pressure, stress-free Friday night out. Dance to the Two-Step, West Coast & East Coast Swing, Waltz, Tango, Salsa and Line Dancing. A night of Ballroom dancing can be arranged with lessons if there are enough people interested. Group lessons start at 7:30pm. Open dance from 8:00-10:30pm. Are you shy about learning to dance or need extra help in learning the dance steps? We can provide private lessons before the group lesson or connect you with someone at the dance to give one on one instruction. We are a friendly mix of both couples and singles. The dance is every Friday night at the Central United Methodist Church, 5265 H Street in the Social Hall. The Hall has a large hardwood floor with plenty of room to dance. We have bottled water for sale and coffee is provided upon request. No smoking or alcohol is allowed in the social hall. Children are welcome with adult supervision. A $2.00 donation is appreciated, but not required. Children are free. We can notify you of upcoming events and any announcements related to the dance by joining our email list at nancin@ pacbell.net. No junk mail will be sent. You can contact us by calling Cindy or Nancy at 916 987-6614 or Linda at 916 332-6463.

Spiritually Speaking

Hope is the bee that makes honey without flowers.

Hope is the invisible part of ourselves that can be the difference between getting somewhere and getting nowhere. Hope is the extra set of muscles that allows us to carry on even though our legs can't support us any longer. Hope is the extra heartbeat that gives us positive energy when our senses can't feel, hear, or see beyond negativity. Hope is the nectar that restores health when our bodies feel old and broken-down.

The one thing everyone has available is hope. Hope keeps us sane and keeps us trying. For as long as we have hope, we'll always feel a candle burning within us that's ready to light the world.

We increase our supply of hope every time we do something good, even when we don't want to. Hope is the extra push we give ourselves to quench rage, to bolster our reserves of patience, and to feel love when we find it difficult to feel. With hope in our lives, all else is possible.

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THE BELLS ARE RINGING -- FOR ME AND MY GAL

(Cont'd)

commitment to each other. Although they have yet to finalize all the details, they are considering writing their own vows and believe that the rings they choose will be nontraditional. The honeymoon plans, however, have been finalized -- a wonderful cruise to Alaska. Ahhh, priorities!

Janet emphasized the importance of making the legal provisions necessary to protect our relationships. She pointed out that in living together, the current laws treat us as little more than roommates. Filing contracts, mutual wills, durable powers of attorney, etc. provide the property and legal rights that a marriage would. Janet and Nancy started by consulting an attorney and strongly recommend that anyone considering cohabiting do likewise. Couples can draw up an Advanced Health Care Directive which is like a living will, outlining what each would like done in the event of incapacitation and who would be making decisions if they were unable to do so. A Durable Power of Attorney can also be utilized, giving your partner the legal authority to make decisions for you and access your finances if you are unable to make decisions for yourself. Additional protections can be provided in contracts, wills and trusts, for example.

For more detailed information, the National Center for Lesbian Rights has an excellent website at www.nclrights.org with several of the Advance Directive documents available for downloading. You may also telephone the organization at (415) 392-6257 to request that an informational packet be mailed to you. As the laws vary in each state, it is strongly recommended that an attorney be consulted, but the NCLR provides an easily accessible way to begin gathering information.

Kris and Ellen recently had an eclectic-style ceremony which they called a matrimonial and which included elements of Buddhism, acknowledgment of the Goddess and some of their "new age" beliefs. In addition to exchanging vows which they had written, they included the chanting of the heart sutra to a female Buddhist deity, prayers to the Goddess, and the sprinkling of rosewater on everyone's crown chakra, followed by the tossing of rose petals on their guests.

Kris and Ellen started the ceremony preparations in January for their May wedding. The first consideration was deciding whom they wanted to attend and then finding a facility that would accommodate their guests. Because they had a wide variety of friends but not the financial resources to include all their friends and family in a formal setting, they eventually decided to have a two-part celebration. First they shared their vows in a small chapel with only their immediate family and most intimate friends. Afterwards they proceeded to a park where approximately 75 people gathered to share a potluck meal and wedding cake with them. This setting provided a more informal outdoor atmosphere where the several children and pets attending could run and play freely.

Kris told us she did the proposing and feels that a lesbian wedding is a way to "ritually and publicly proclaim the profound love, appreciation and connection" she and Ellen share. She says that having a ceremony has further strengthened her desire to develop a long-term relationship and that "my commitment has committed me, as I hoped it would." Ellen explained that she married "for love" and, in a larger context, "in order to make a meaningful statement to our universe that my choices are equally as valid as those made in mainstream heterosexual society."

Terri and Mary were friends for a year before beginning their relationship over 5-1/2 years ago. In October of 2000, on their fifth anniversary, Terri proposed at a surprise party and, in front of their friends, asked Mary to be part of her life forever. No one was surprised when Mary happily said yes. They are now in the process of planning an October ceremony and have selected the Unitarian Church as their venue. (Incidentally, the Unitarian church has a long-standing commitment to lesbians and gays and has been performing Services of Union for same-gender partners since 1984.)

This couple envisions their service being "as traditional as you can get with two women." Mary says they are referring to it as either a wedding or a commitment ceremony, depending upon to whom they are speaking and what the listener would be most comfortable hearing. They will dress formally, wearing a tuxedo and wedding gown, and will exchange conventional vows and traditional style rings. Although they are planning to have the conventional vows performed by an officiant, they will also share personally composed vows during the service. Music, flowers, wedding cake and champagne toast? Of course, the works! And the moderately sized guest party will dance outdoors on the patio under the stars following the service. Although the honeymoon plans have not yet been finalized, they have not ruled out rafting down the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon.

(Continued on next page)

THE BELLS ARE RINGING ...
(Cont'd)

When asked whether they feel that having a ceremony will change their relationship, they don't think that it will. "Our commitment to each other was made a long time ago. This is our chance to share that commitment and love with friends and family."

We want to wish these and all other lesbians in committed relationships, whether planning ceremonies or not, an abundance of health, happiness and love as they share their lives together. And we would wish for our elected officials the wisdom, humanity, courage and sense of fairness to legalize for us the same marital rights and privileges enjoyed by heterosexual couples.

FREE ADS

(See Newsletter Policy on Page 2 for Information About Free Ads)

Timeshare weeks for sale. Do you want to go somewhere in the world? Inexpensive. I have extra timeshare weeks to use. Call Patricia at 568-7777 or e-mail at mdigi2000@hotmail.com

Wanted by lesbian: Car to borrow, rent or possibly purchase for the months of June, July, August and September. Please contact Gretchen at 922-6287.

Experienced Musicians Wanted. Seeking female musician's to play 70's, 80's, top 40 or ?? Need back-up vocals, guitar, bass and a drummer. Please have prior band experience. For more information, call Donna @ 916-351-5620

Letters from SACWN Newsletter readers

Dear SACWN:

I read your article on "How to tell if you're a butch or a femme" in the last newsletter. I digested it with a grain of salt as I assumed Ms. Behavior had written it with tongue in cheek. However, my phone soon rang with an irate and, at the same time, very hurt friend complaining to me about the article.

My friend considers herself totally femme and is very clear about it. By the tone of the article, she felt that SACWN was taking a disparaging position on her sexuality. I suggested that she call or write SACWN and make them aware of her feelings and perhaps they could explain to her satisfaction that it was not their intent to disparage or discredit anyone.

Some time passed and when I next saw my friend I asked her if she had contacted SACWN about the article. She replied, "Oh, they would not understand!" She had also mentioned her unhappiness over the article to her butch friend who told her that "they don't get it and you would be wasting your time talking to them".

I believe that one way you can hope to change people's perception of you is through communication. If you do not feel strongly enough about something to stand up for your beliefs, then you cannot be upset when people speak out on an issue that affects you negatively.

For me, I consider myself a femme. Sure I can wield a hammer with the best of them, but show me any homeowner whether femme or butch that can't. But, no matter how hard I try, I still can't lead when I dance.

Name Withheld

Dear SACWN:

Well, how to start. I am new to the Sacramento community and SACWN, and I am Hi-Femme. I read the article from Ms. Behavior's Butch/Femme. I was very upset to say the least. I cried, pouted and got very angry. Then I calmed down. It's okay that the community does not get the dance between Butch/Femme, you don't have to. I'm not going to hold a Butch/Femme 101 class.

There are a lot of things I don't understand about the different ways we are, but the difference is I respect all of my sisters, my community. Cannot we Butch/Femme expect the same respect and how about male to female, female to male or whatever. I had to do a lot of soul searching for myself. It was a real learning experience. I think we all need to support each other, love one another, and respect the differences between each one of us. I am not comfortable calling myself a lesbian anymore. I think queer suits me better.

I have volunteered to be on the SACWN Steering Committee and I am very excited to become a part of it. I hope I am welcome, as I truly love all women. I am not an educated writer, but I love my community and just hope they love all as well.

Name Withheld

LAMBDA PRIDE FESTIVAL

Saturday, June 16
Southside Park
10:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Look For Our Booth:

SACWN Inc.

Save This Date, Ladies!

BUS TRIP TO TAHOE

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29TH

$20 - WITH COUPONS ON ARRIVAL

DETAILS TO FOLLOW IN AUGUST NEWSLETTER

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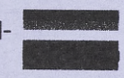
Celebrating Gay Pride Month ... History of Gay Icons



The Rainbow Flag has become the easily recognized colors of pride for the gay community, but did you know that the rainbow also plays a part in many myths and stories related to gender and sexuality issues in Greek, Native American, African and other cultures?

Use of the rainbow flag by the gay community began in 1978 when it first appeared in the San Francisco Gay and Lesbian Freedom Day Parade. Borrowing symbolism from the hippie movement and Black civil rights groups, San Francisco artist Gilbert Baker designed the flag in response to the need for a symbol that could be used year after year. Baker and thirty volunteers then hand-stitched and hand-dyed two huge prototype flags for the parade. The original flags had eight stripes representing the many components of the community: hot pink for sex, red for life, orange for healing, yellow for sun, green for nature, turquoise for art, indigo for harmony and violet for spirit.

The following year when Baker sought to have rainbow flags mass-produced for the 1979 parade, he found certain production constraints, such as the fact that hot pink was not a commercially available color. Subsequently the pink and turquoise were removed from the design and royal blue replaced the indigo. This six-color version spread from San Francisco to other cities and soon became the widely-known symbol of gay pride and diversity it is today.

The Pink Triangle, another widely-recognized symbol for the gay community, is rooted in World War II times and reminds us of the tragedies of that era. The history of the pink triangle began before WWII when Paragraph 175, a clause in German law prohibiting homosexual relations, was revised by Hitler in 1935 to include kissing, embracing and gay fantasies as well as sexual acts. Convicted offenders were sent to prison and then later to concentration camps. Initially the sentence was sterilization but in 1942 this was extended to death.

Each prisoner in the concentration camps wore a colored inverted triangle to designate their reason for incarceration: a green triangle marked the wearer as a regular criminal; a red triangle denoted a political prisoner; two yellow triangles overlapping to form a Star of David designed a Jewish prisoner; and the pink triangle was for homosexuals. Stories of the camps depict homosexual prisoners as being given the worst tasks and labors as well as a proportionately large focus of attacks from the guards. When the war was finally over, countless homosexuals remained in prison camps because Paragraph 175 remained in law until its repeal in 1969.

In the 1970s, gay liberation groups resurrected the pink triangle as a symbol for the gay rights movement. Not only is the symbol easily recognized, but it draws attention to oppression and persecution -- then and now. In the 1980s, ACT-UP began reinverting the triangle, making it point up to signify an active fight back. Today the pink triangle represents pride, solidarity, and a promise to never allow another Holocaust to happen again.
Like the pink triangle, **the black triangle** is also rooted in Nazi Germany. Although lesbians were not included in the Paragraph 175 prohibition against homosexuality, there is evidence to indicate that the black triangle was used to designate prisoners with anti-social behavior. Considering that the Nazi idea of womanhood focused on children, kitchen and church, black triangle prisoners may have included lesbians, women who refused to bear children, and women with other "anti-social" traits. As the pink triangle is historically a male symbol, the black triangle has similarly been reclaimed by lesbians and feminists as a symbol of pride and solidarity.

Gender Symbols are common astrological signs handed down from ancient Roman times. The pointed Mars symbol represents the male and the Venus symbol with the cross represents the female. These double interlocking symbols have been used by gays and lesbians since the 1970s, with some feminists using the double female symbols to represent the sisterhood of women. Also, some lesbian feminists of the 70s used three interlocking female symbols to represent their rejection of male standards of monogamy. A transgendered person might superimpose the male and female symbols in such a way that the arrow and cross join on the same single ring.

The astrological sign of **Mercury** is traditionally the symbol of transgendered peoples. In the symbol itself, the crescent moon at the top is supposed to represent the masculine, and the cross at the bottom represents the feminine. The ring represents the individual, with the male and the female balanced at either side.

The lambda symbol, adopted in 1970 by the New York Gay Activists Alliance, seems to be one of the most controversial of symbols with regard to its meaning because there are several differing opinions as to why it was chosen as a gay symbol and what it really means. Some suggest it is simply the Greek lowercase letter for liberation. The lambda also may represent scales and balance, and the constant force that keeps opposing sides from overcoming each other. The ancient Greek Spartans regarded the lambda to mean unity, while the Romans considered it "the light of knowledge shed into the darkness of ignorance." Whatever the exact meaning and origin, the lambda originally embodied a fairly militant connotation. Today, the symbol generally denotes lesbians' and gay men's concerns together.

The labrys is a double-sided hatchet or axe commonly used in ancient European, African and Asian matriarchal societies both as a weapon and a harvesting tool. Greek artwork depicts the amazon armies of Europe wielding labrys weapons. Amazons were known to be ferocious and merciless in battle, but once victorious they ruled with justice. In addition, the labrys also played a part in ancient mythology. Demeter, the goddess of the earth, used a labrys as her scepter. Rites associated with the worship of Demeter, as well as Hecate (the goddess of the underworld) are believed to have involved lesbian sex. Today, the labrys is a lesbian and feminist symbol of strength and self-sufficiency.

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